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BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

Seed and Plant Introduction and Distribution,

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REDDTOP (*Agrostis alba*).

This grass is also called herds-grass in some parts of the South. It is a perennial, with slender, erect, smooth stems, 1 to 2 feet high, arising from creeping rootstocks. The leaves are flat, narrow, and slightly rough, and 2 to 3 inches long. Redtop was introduced from Europe and is now so well known throughout the United States that it needs little description, especially in the timothy region, where the combination of timothy, redtop, and clover is the most common meadow-pasture mixture. In that section of the United States from the Atlantic Ocean to a line extending through the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas south to the parallel forming the northern boundary of Tennessee, redtop is of the most importance. However, it can be grown to advantage in all parts of the United States on low, wet soils. As far west as Washington and Oregon it does well in marshy situations, driving out all other grasses. It seems to be naturally adapted to moist mountain meadows and grows well in a mixture with timothy under such conditions. It will endure great extremes of temperature, thriving from the shores of the Great Lakes to the Gulf coast, provided conditions of moisture are favorable. There is no better grass for the heavy clay soils of the Middle Atlantic States. It is also valuable as a sand binder.

Uses and value.—Although redtop makes a hay which, according to chemical analysis, is equally as valuable as timothy, it is not relished by stock, and consequently can not be compared with the latter. This objection to redtop is universal and is a very serious drawback to its more general use. As a pasture grass, redtop is not nearly so palatable as most of the common grasses, but it is of considerable value in a mixture, as it produces leaves near the ground, thus working in well with orchard grass and others which are inclined to be bunchy. On wet soils a mixture of it with alsike gives excellent results. The life of a redtop meadow is about six years, but it can be kept fairly productive for a longer period by a top-dressing of barnyard manure or other fertilizer. Most of the seed is produced in a limited area in southern Illinois, and a yield of about 14 bushels of seed to the acre is usually obtained. Ordinary seed weighs 14 pounds a bushel, while the recleaned seed weighs about 36 pounds. The cost of the ordinary seed is from 8 to 12 cents a pound and that of the recleaned seed 14 to 20 cents a pound.

Seeding.—When seeded alone, 20 to 30 pounds of ordinary seed are required per acre and 12 to 15 pounds of the recleaned seed. Redtop gives the best results when sown in the fall on well-prepared land without a nurse crop.

